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ABSTRACT

This report presents an indepth study of the events and psychology in the past of Augusta, Georgia which help explain the violence and the killing of six Blacks on the night of May 11, 1970. The second study in this report deals with the events and killings of two young black men at Jackson State College on May 15, 1970. These two events had several points in common not only with each other, but also with similar tragedies across the nation. These include: (1) they occurred in an atmosphere of hostility encouraged by inflammatory statements of leaders, statements which exacerbate tensions between groups and which seem to approve the over-use of police and military force; (2) both instances reflected not only new, intolerable pressures, but long neglected problems; (3) death and injuries in both instances resulted from gunfire from heavy-calibre ammunition; and (4) in both instances, questions have been raised about police attitudes toward black people and the general principle of the right of protest, and about the effectiveness of the riot control training of the police. (AF)

ED050662

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

AND

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

Southern Episodes In A National Tragedy

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INTRODUCTION

The violence at Augusta, Ga. and at Jackson State College inevitably invite comparison to the tragedy at Kent State University. The national atmosphere of violent impatience with dissent, fed by inflammatory rhetoric of high officials, most surely played a role both in Augusta and in Jackson.

But the incidents should also be seen in their southern contexts. William Winn, Atlanta journalist and free-lance writer, writes here in some depth of the events and psychology in the past of Augusta which help explain violence there and hopefully suggest ways for other southern cities to avoid it. The Augusta study uses and is informed by in-depth, tape-recorded interviews with black Augustans conducted by D. L. Inman, editor of the Thomasville, (Ga.), News. Ed Williams, a Mississippi journalist and freelance writer, describes in more topical form the Jackson State violence as one more chapter in the generally familiar history of racial discord in Jackson, Mississippi. Together, these two reports present a composite of contemporary southern problems and the ongoing tragedy in places where efforts

to meet the problems have been few and futile.

The fact is -- and Augusta is perhaps more illustrative of the point -- there are likely scores of southern towns and cities that have yet to respond in any measurably positive way to the just demands of their dispossessed citizens. There are, moreover, localities in the South that have never yet felt any real pressure to respond and perhaps many others that do not even feel that there are any demands in need of attention. Augusta stands as a monument to such blind optimism.

The events at Jackson State, from all available reports, seem more directly tied to the national mood. And yet there are pecularily southern factors which should not be ignored, a lifetime of fear, suspicion and distrust between southern Negroes and white law enforcement officers with origins deep in a dark tangle of violent racist reaction. But put the two together, a growing national mood of repression and the South's raw racism, and the events at Jackson State not only become credible but seem almost inevitable.

It is this very danger that has caused apprehension among concerned southerners, black and white, at the national administration's blandishments toward the most destructive forces at large in the South today.

The current national crisis regarding lawful and unlawful dissent and terrible police overreaction is an old story to the South. The Southern Regional Council has repeatedly directed itself to the essentials of the problem in reports and official statements during the past decade. These have again and again tried to alert the nation to dangers from both under-protection by police of constitutional rights, and over-reaction by police to disorder and violence.

In 1960, regarding white violence against non-violent protest in the South, the publication, "Racial Violence and Law Enforcement," stated:

> Law enforcement is. . .an essential factor in the progress of race relations. In the continuing racial crises of the South, the police have two basic responsibilities: to enforce the laws with absolute impartiality; and, secondly, to maintain a climate of public order in which constitutional liberties can be freely exercised, by white men or Negroes, by integrationists, or segregationists.

In August, 1967, after northern ghetto riots, a policy statement by the membership of the Southern Regional Council, "On the National Crisis," stated:

> There should be no confusion of rioting with either the tradition of non-violent Negro protest demonstrations or with the honorable philosophical principles of civil disobedience. Unlawful violence by a mob has none of the moral defense or force of these traditions, and such violence must be quelled, just as white mob violence against constitutional peaceful protest has to be. But in both instances, we must be alert to the

> dangers of excessive, unconstitutional use of police force; we must look with apprehension on any tendency to be satisfied merely with the momentary ending of the symptom of violence without following through with treatment of the social and economic malfunctionings that are the underlying cause of such violence.

In February, 1968, after state police fired rifles into a crowd of demonstrating black students at South Carolina State College, killing three, a report, "Events At Orangeburg," stated:

> "Get-tough" policies, wherever put into effect, carry into highly volatile situations new elements of danger. Order must be maintained, but the duty of society and of police is that it be so with a minimum of force. At least suggested -- in Orangeburg and evident in other situations that have arisen in the South and other parts of the nation -- is the frightening spectacle of an over-escalation of police and military force . . ., a pouring of large numbers of heavily armed men into tense situations, increasing the emotionalism involved, increasing a dependence on force to suppress people rather than honestly dealing with the social problems at the source, and a conditioning of the American public already far along to an acceptance of violence and death in the resolution of problems.

In May, 1970, after National Guardsmen fired into a crowd of students at Kent State University, killing four (and only a few days before city police fired on people at Augusta, Ga., in a Negro riot situation, killing six, and state police fired on black students at Jackson State College in Jackson, Miss., killing two), a statement by Dr. Raymond Wheeler, President, and Paul Anthony, Executive Director, of the Southern Regional Council, stated:

> The grave warning implicit in the Orangeburg situation of two years ago was not heeded. Since then, the situation has escalated. Officials at all levels have increasingly relied indiscriminately on force in the face of conflict, and have all too often over-reacted to protest with over-armed police and soldiers. The potential for disaster in such situations continues. Until such solutions are abandoned, until they are repudiated as public policy from the Presidency on down, no segment of society, no person is safe. And traditional American freedoms are periled.

These statements trace a tragic thread of history during a crucial decade of American history. They speak the same message, but with increasing urgency, a reflection of the escalation of animosity and official violence. Too often, force was used in the South of the early 1960's to put down the rightful expression of grievances in non-violent demonstrations. Too often, force far disproportionate to need was used in the North to quell rioting which expressed illegally entirely legitimate grievances of the people of black ghettos. In neither instance did the society and its government deal effectively with the grievances.

Now we see the South's first major Negro riot occurring in Augusta. Now we see instance after instance of the reliance on might and force against yet another expression of legitimate grievances, students protesting against war and the general drift of American policy. In the southern versions -- at Jackson State, as earlier at

Orangeburg -- the over-use of force had elements of the old uses of it -- racial oppression.

These two most recent southern instances of the over-use of force and failure to redress just grievances have points in common with each other and are applicable to such tragedies across the nation, past and future.

1. They occurred in an atmosphere of hostility encouraged by inflammatory statements of leaders, statements which exacerbate tensions between groups and which seem to approve the over-use of police and military force. Governors of states, congressmen and even the President of the United States and his Vice President have been criticized for such utterances. Even after terrible tragedy, seemingly needless killing, such abdication of responsibility continued:

President Nixon, after the Kent killings:

> This should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy. It is my hope that this tragic and unfortunate incident will strengthen the determination of all the nation's campuses, administrators, faculty and students. . .to stand firmly for the right of peaceful dissent and just as strongly against the resort to violence as a means of such expression.

Governor Lester Maddox, after the Augusta killings:

> If they shoot at our guardsmen and firemen, they had better be prepared to meet their Maker. We have the trucks, personnel and guns to do the job. I'm in constant contact with the people down there and I'll go there and do whatever is necessary.

Governor John Bell Williams, after the Mississippi State killings:

> As your governor, I will tell you here and now that the majesty of the law will be upheld so long as I am governor and every means available to the State of Mississippi will be employed to make certain that all people of Mississippi will be able to live in their homes free from the fear of having their homes burned by some Molotov cocktail or their businesses destroyed.
>
> The peaceful people who are the majority of America have a right to expect at least restraint from leaders. Real leadership would find the vision to guide our people to peaceful solutions to problems.

2. Both instances reflected, once more, not only new, intolerable pressures, but long-neglected problems. In the South, despite some recent progress, this means failure to cope fully with racial injustice and poverty. No rational citizen condones violence, whether on the campus or in the ghetto. But -- as from the beginning -- the demands of civilization are that police use only necessary force to restore order, and that government and society redress just grievances.

3. Deaths and injuries in both instances resulted from gunfire -- and gunfire from heavy-calibre ammunition. The nation needs to demand and somehow effectively enforce a prohibition on police and the National Guard from resort to gunfire where less lethal methods would prevail. Never

should there be tolerated random firing without given orders, without warnings, without attempts at conventional, non-violent methods of crowd control. Beyond this, we need to demand that if the police and military go armed into situations of civil protest and even minor violence, they carry non-lethal ammunition -- like small-calibre buckshot.

4. In both instances, questions have been raised about police attitudes toward black people and the general principle of the right of protest, and about how effectively trained for so-called riot control the police were. The nation needs to address itself to the questions of police attitudes, and police training. Models of far more effective, far less violent, non-lethal methods of riot control are available in civilized countries all over the world.

5. Both incidents leave unanswered critical questions about what happened, and why. Even if subsequent investigations by conventional agencies -- like grand juries or even the United States Justice Department -- find answers to all the questions, it is doubtful in each locale whether they would be fully accepted by contending parties or the general public. Distrust, bitter memories of one such tragedy presage greater ones for the

future. Perhaps the nation needs to consider whether it is possible in these times to find an apparatus, an investigative body -- something more than a temporary "blue ribbon" committee as proposed by the present administration -- which would be beyond reproach and rational doubt. Representation on it of the classes of citizens who consider themselves victims of police oppression would seem mandatory.

6. In Augusta, the city obviously failed its responsibilities to law-abiding black citizens who until the May night of violence had relied in vain on non-violent methods and leaders. In Mississippi, in the aftermath of the Jackson State tragedy, moderate men who have staunchly advocated non-violence in the face of repeated private and police violence over the years now question the principle. So-called extremists on both sides have gained in both locales. Responsible observers cannot say merely that this is to be expected, or that more violence is inevitable. As from the beginning, they must demand adequate answers to the underlying causes of violent protest. . .they must demand some answer other than brute force and overkill. In Jackson, the suggestion has been made that a third force of black leaders, other than police henceforth be empowered to cope with situations of tense

or violent protest. America can do better than demand that of its citizens.

7. More than anything else, these two incidents of police violence in the South compel America to demand law and order from its leaders and its law enforcement agencies.

Pat Watters
Robert E. Anderson, Jr.
Southern Regional Council

x

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

By

William Winn

with

D. L. Inman

AUGUSTA

Augusta, Georgia, is hot in May. Temperatures soar into the 90's by the middle of the month, and summer comes to the town's 100,000-odd residents long before most other Americans consider it safe to put away their sweaters and overcoats. The pavement on Broad Street, the town's main business street, is too hot to walk on barefooted at noon almost any May day, and the oppressive, wet, heat shimmers on the black top roads around town and on the dirt byways that lace the city's dilapidated Negro section, known locally as "the territory." The air is so humid that when one takes a lungful of air, the sensation is often less that of breathing than of drinking; and when the wind is wrong, the polluted, slimy-green waters of the Savannah River vaporize in the streets and the city has the stench of decay.

Augusta once had a certain reputation for quaintness, preserving a modicum of colonial charm amid the usual hodgepodge of Victorian storefronts and glassy, rigid, modern office buildings. No more. Broad Street glitters with flashing neon signs and the almost equally bright hair of the peroxide blondes, permanent temptations to the service-men at nearby Fort Gordon who flood the city at night to

sample the charms of the Go-Go dancers and the music and the booze at any of a dozen juke joint watering holes.

As in all but the largest cities in the South, the town and the surrounding countryside are really inseparable. The ugliness of the city is offset by the bucolic, primordial beauty of farmland and pine forests that lie just beyond the city limit signs and that, in both fact and spirit, make Richmond County and Augusta one environmental unit. The difference between the city and the country is not so much visual as olfactory and auditory: the sweet, cloying smell of the honeysuckle in the countryside defines the city limits better than the signs, (which could be pushed back a half mile from any point toward the town's interior without much loss of mayoral sovereignty and with a noticeable increase in accuracy), and the grinding noises of the urban center evaporate quickly in the rising summer air once you escape suburbia outbound.

By the second week of May, 1970, temperatures were in the 90's, and the thin, tall Confederate monument on Broad Street cast a solid, ebony shadow by 10 o'clock in the morning. Any white man with a shred of sanity and $150 in his bank account quit the city as soon as possible after making a gesture at working, retreating to the cool and

manicured confines of North Augusta, securely entrenched behind the crabgrass curtain. Poorer blacks worked precisely as long as they had to and then walked over a few blocks to their homes on Gwinnett Street or caught a bus out the Old Savannah Road to one of the shacks of the type white men build at their favorite fishing spots or erect as emergency shelters in time of war. In Augusta black families live in those shacks year around. One such family is that of Charles Oatman, 16, lately deceased at the hands of as yet undetermined individuals, a retarded, somewhat frail boy whose demise touched off a major racial disorder Monday night, May 11, leaving six dead -- all Negroes and all shot in the back -- at least 80 injured, about 50 businesses burned, and more than 200 arrested.

Many seasoned observers were calling it the first genuine race riot in the history of the South, and although that assertion is certainly open to question, the Augusta "riot" should go down as one of the most unnecessary, senseless, mindless examples of violence to be found anywhere.

Whites are quick to call any racial disorder a "riot." The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders pointed out in its initial report that there have been few genuine

examples of racial rioting in the U. S. For one thing, Negroes have rarely actually gone into white neighborhoods and attacked people there. Most of the violence in American racial disorders has been confined to Negro sections and ghettos, and the burning and looting in those areas has customarily been carried out against symbols of white oppression, i.e., businesses, white-owned buildings, and the like. Augusta was no exception.

BACKGROUND FOR VIOLENCE

There is no doubt that both black and white leaders knew -- or certainly they should have known -- of the potential for serious racial trouble in Augusta. Immediately preceeding the riot, some Negro officials well inside the protective cocoon of the city's middle class made repeated attempts to tell Augusta's civic leadership that the city was amuck with racial tensions.

"I tried to tell them what was happening," said one of the most experienced and competent Negro leaders, a man so much bedeviled by the establishment that he refuses identification. "There were plenty of signs that this thing was brewing. Just weeks before, a small incident at one of the local schools attracted a crowd of demonstrators. I

didn't just come right out and say we were going to have a race riot. I couldn't do that or the whites would have identified me with all the causes other Negroes were espousing. But I repeatedly told city officials that there were more signs of discontent among black people here -- particularly the young -- than I could remember. It didn't do any good."

It hasn't done any good for a long time. Racism in Augusta is as much a part of the local ambiance as the oppressive heat and the wisteria and azaleas and the honeysuckled country air. Racism has seeped into the very pores of the city. It is reflected from the faces of the tired, low income, poor whites, already stalked by a deep, inbred fear of the black man and terrorized near senseless by the hard reality of the riot itself:

"A car full of them come by my place last night. One of them says to me, 'You don't like me, white man?' That's what he said, 'You don't like me, white man?' I said, 'Hell no, I don't like any of you sons-a-bitches.' He said, 'Then we're just going to stomp your flowers.' And I said, 'Go ahead, they'll be the last goddamn flowers you stomp.'"

Racism is a part of the baggage every white man carries with him when he makes a trip across town through the Negro neighborhoods; it is in his mind when he considers a Negro for employment, for job training, for promotion, for education, for housing; it governs his attitudes on a multiple of questions, civic and personal: on where to locate his business, on how to assess property taxes, how to enforce housing codes, who to invite to cocktails, around whom it is socially acceptable to say 'nigger,' where his children should go to school, what time his daughter should come in from dates, where he should buy a house, go swimming, take a walk, get a maid, which program he should watch on television -- and in hundreds of other ways of which he is no longer conscious, no longer even able to articulate to himself and which he will heatedly deny if questioned openly.

The black community is as systematically discriminated against in Augusta as in any city in America. Yet local whites expressed amazement and dismay at the riot. A frequently heard statement in Augusta before the riot was, "We don't have any race problems here." Taxi drivers, barbers, bartenders, civic officials, all were incredulous

that the city should be struck by racial turmoil. "I just never would have believed it could happen here," said one cab driver, "but I'll tell you what, I don't think it's over."

"That's just the problem," says Charles Barreras, director of the local poverty program. "Few whites here believe we have a problem at all. It's ridiculous, but it's true. Most of the whites live in the suburbs and in North Augusta. They come into the city to work, and then get in their cars and go back home. In a sense, they're right: there isn't any racial problem where they live. But there sure is here in the city, and if someone doesn't get through to the whites that this whole complex -- Richmond County, the suburbs, the ghettos -- is one place, one unit in which we all have to live, then I don't know what is going to happen.

"Look, 42 per cent of the city is black, yet 67 per cent of the poor are black. One-third of the people in Richmond County are poor, and we lead the nation in school dropouts. You name it, we got it."

Mr. Barreras said he was amazed that the city hadn't been struck by a race riot earlier. "Anything could have

touched it off. I hate to talk about racism, but it exists. It's here, alright. The way our urban center is set up there is just no room for growth. The whites come into the city to work and then forget about it and go home. We are making our own ghetto. A community is supposed to be a living organism. Look, why didn't the Negroes riot against the county jail? That's where the Oatman boy was murdered. Why didn't they just strike against the county? I'll tell you why: because the problem is the city."

Paramount among those problems, according to Barreras:

--- Education: Richmond County (which includes the city schools) not only leads the nation in school dropouts, it is an educational wasteland for Negroes in general. The 1960 census showed that out of 65,000 adults in Richmond County 25 years of age or older, 38,000 had less than a high school education. Of the approximately 13,000 with high school diplomas, around 12,000 were white. Richmond County was one of the slowest systems in the country to integrate its schools. Blacks still complain bitterly about the problem today.

--- Unemployment and underemployment: the unemployment

problem in Augusta is not as bad as in some cities in the South, but, according to Barreras, the unemployment rate is rising. A far worse problem is underemployment.

"It is very difficult for whites here to accept the notion that a person without a high school education can often do a job as well as someone with a diploma. Having a high school education is no guarantee that a person can do better than someone without a diploma. Yet, a high school education is usually the minimum standard required for a job. We got between 40,000 and 50,000 Negroes here, and how many over 25 got high school educations? About a thousand."

--- Housing: few people in Augusta would deny that inadequate, sub-standard housing is a major problem. Barreras says it is one of the worst housing situations anywhere.

"Fully 80 per cent of the rented housing in this city is in violation of the housing code. Our public housing is in fairly good shape, though the city just received $4.7 million for additional

public housing. It's the rented property that's the problem."

--- Poverty: about one-third of the total Richmond County-Augusta population of more than 140,000 is below the poverty level income, and poverty is the major problem, period. For example, in the 9th census tract, an area closely circumscribing the center of the May riot, 68 per cent of the families were listed as poor or low-income in the 1960 census. The 14th and 15th census tracts, areas immediately adjacent to the 9th and like the 9th nearly all-Negro residential areas, showed a 67 per cent and a 68 per cent incidence of poverty, respectively, in 1960.

If anything, Barreras thinks the situation has gotten worse in these areas in the last decade.

The incidence of poverty holds true for the entire area of the riots and directly corresponds with the location of Negro housing. The 6th and 7th census tracts, adjacent to and north of the 9th, showed an incidence of poverty of 61 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively, in 1960. These statistics, again, refer to families, not

individuals.

In other words then, if you took a crayon and colored in the areas of Augusta where there is the lowest income, lowest level of educational achievement, highest incidence of unemployment and underemployment, and highest density of Negro residents, you would almost perfectly outline the area of chaos on the night of May 11, 1970.

Augusta whites, or many of them anyway, have resisted the implementation of racial justice ever since the Supreme Court decision of 1954. The Association for the Restoration of States Rights was organized in the city in 1954 in response to the court decision, and Roy V. Harris, a local lawyer and publisher of the scurrilous Augusta Courier, shortly emerged as one of the nation's most hysterical segregationists and rabble rousers. Despite a militantly hostile atmosphere, local blacks began attempts to integrate city bus service in 1960 when eleven students from Paine College were arrested and jailed for violation of an ordinance forbidding integration of city transit vehicles. The Negroes sued the city and, two years later, obtained relief when a federal court struck down state laws on segregation of buses. 1960 also saw the first of the student sit-ins at

lunch counters, and violence flared when peaceful students were attacked by whites. In 1962, Negroes began to step up their demands for equality, given additional incentive by the knowledge that Augusta was said at the time to be the only major city in Georgia with virtually no integration. Pressure from the Negro community in Augusta forced the white establishment to meet the black leaders and work out an agreement whereby the downtown lunch counters were integrated. That year, whites and blacks clashed in fist fights, and the city teetered on the brink of a major disorder. A Negro youth was stabbed, and a white youth was shot to death as he drove his car through a black neighborhood. Many whites in Augusta have not forgotten that time, and there is little doubt that the violence of 1962 served to calcify the already hardened racist fears of the whites. In 1963, 14 city parks were integrated, and local stores and plants began to put blacks in jobs above the menial level. A year later, downtown theatres were integrated, and the Richmond County School System also began token integration.

In 1968, Rev. C. S. Hamilton, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, the largest Negro congregation in the city,

said that race relations had improved in the preceeding five years, but he added: "That doesn't mean we have solved our problems. As a matter of fact, people here are somewhat indifferent to the racial situation. When we work, you could say we work more on the symptoms than the causes."

And in 1968, Negroes listed the same grievances they first articulated in 1954, then again in 1962, and 1963. The complaints have not changed, and you could take a list of grievances from any of the years listed here and they would coincide perfectly with those voiced by the Negro community in May, 1970: white racism, unemployment, under-employment, wretched housing, lack of adequate recreational facilities, discrimination in education, inadequate public services, and so on. Whatever gains the black Augustan has made in the last decade came by the hardest route, wrested from the hands of a white population whose one distinguishing attitude toward racial justice has been monumental indifference.

That the white residents of Augusta should exhibit the latter characteristic is not really suprising. The city is steeped in the mythology of the Old South. It started as a fort and a little fur trading center in the early

eighteenth century, and soon became an important tobacco market for transplanted Virginians living up river at Petersburg. It is, quite literally, the locale of Tobacco Road, Erskine Caldwell having used Augusta and environs for his famous novel. Prior to the Civil War, it was the largest cotton market in Middle Georgia, capitalizing on its location on the Savannah River and benefitting from the growth of Savannah downstream where cotton was shipped abroad. After the war, it became a large cotton manufacturing center, which it still is. The city is located on the eastern edge of the Georgia Piedmont, prime cotton country, and slavery was early a traditional form of labor. The white inhabitants, of course, are ever recalling the whiff of the plantation days and the summers of wisteria and, like most Southerners, they consider themselves reft of a better life, and look on the past and the Lost Cause with fervid nostalgia. In this century, the city has benefitted from the development of a local kaoline industry, and the location of two massive federal installations, Fort Gordon and the Savannah River AEC plant, nearby. Although a handful of blacks have benefitted from the AEC plant and the military reservation, most have not, and the city's business and

industrial development has proceeded steadily without a coeval rise in the Negro-Augustan's standard of living.

Blacks have watched the city grow and prosper in mounting isolation and frustration. They have slowly been sealed off, both spiritually and physically, from the life of the city. Now they reside in urban ghettos which bear a striking resemblance to those found in America's northern cities. The Negro is no more a part of the white community's consciousness in Augusta now than he was 100 years ago. Although neither the city itself nor the city and the county combined are really populated enough to be called a metropolis, Augusta exhibits most of the ills that afflict the nation's largest cities, including a decaying urban center, white migration to the suburbs, segregation of minority groups, and a dreadful lack of communication between civic officials and the low income, primarily Negro residents.

CRISIS IN THE MAKING

A string of incidents prior to the May 11 riot should have alerted the town's civic officials to potential violence.

On December 22, 1969, Grady Abrams, a Negro city councilman, was roughly detained by county police on

allegations of having passed bad checks. News of his seizure provoked an immediate response from some Negroes, and a delegation went to the county jail to investigate. A simmering feud has long existed between the county police of Sheriff E. R. Atkins (nicknamed "Foots" by Augusta blacks) and the city's Negroes. Abrams was released and no charges were brought against him. He is sueing the police for $150,000 and they have filed a countersuit.

On December 23rd, still stewing over the Abrams affair, nine Augusta Negroes and one white, all Army veterans, formed an organization known as the Committee of 10 (later enlarged to the Committee of 10 Plus 200). Their chairman is John Young, an insurance consultant. Bob Oliver, a member of the original committee, said the group was formed to protect the city's blacks and to work for implementation of a meaningful program of progress toward racial equality. Although most Negroes dislike talking about it, there is conclusive evidence that a large portion of the black residents of Augusta, particularly the young, were dissatisfied with the efforts of the city's traditional Negro leadership and wanted a change. On the day they formed, the committee went to the municipal building to clear up the

charges in the Abrams affair. Oliver says they were rebuffed, and, at one point, actually surrounded by sheriff's deputies carrying shotguns, one machine gun, and a grease gun.

"We considered the situation so hopeless," says Oliver, "that we sent telegrams to President Nixon and to the Attorney General, John Mitchell. We asked Mitchell for an investigation of the sheriff's department. We got no answer." (After the riot, in a note of irony, the Justice Department announced it was sending a team of investigators to look into the jail operation of the sheriff's department -- six months and seven deaths after the committee's appeal in December.)

In April, 1970, many Augustans were aware of rumors of trouble to come during the playing of the Masters golf tournament, and although those rumors did not materialize, they were widespread enough to have caused alarm among local officials, and more than customary concern among tournament officials. Most of the rumors involved Gary Player, the great golfer from South Africa. He was given police protection, and steps were taken to protect the property of the Augusta National course where the event is held.

Shortly after the Masters, on April 23, the trial of

a Negro woman, Barbara Gilliam, 29, brought tempers in Augusta's Negro community to the boiling point. Miss Gilliam was convicted of possession of narcotics in the Superior Court of Richmond County, and sentenced to five years and a fine of $2,000.

"I thought it was going to pop then," says John Ruffin, a local Negro attorney. "She was a very popular girl, and most people in our community thought the sentence was far too stiff. In fact, a lot of black folks doubted her guilt, and they were troubled that there were no blacks on the final jury. (Negroes were stricken from the empaneling by the prosecutor)."

Immediately on the heels of the Gilliam trial came an incident at Houghton Elementary School, an integrated institution with a fifty per cent black student body. An eleven year old black student was sent home to his mother on April 22 for bad conduct. He had been in trouble before, and the school's white principal, J. Guyton Thompson, had made repeated efforts to secure more supervision from the boy's mother, but to no avail. This time, the boy was taken home in the custody of a juvenile officer, and it was understood that he was to be expelled for the duration

of the school year. On April 27, the boy's mother and three men came to see Thompson to determine if the boy could be reinstated. The principal refused to admit the boy, although he offered the mother the choice of withdrawing her son and enrolling him elsewhere without having the expulsion note on the record. On Tuesday, April 28, high school students, and students from Paine and Augusta College began to picket the school. They carried signs saying: "If you want to end institutionalized racism call Roy E. Rollins (superintendent of Richmond County schools). Eleven year old boy falsely accused of rape at Houghton Elementary School." Although Thompson made repeated attempts to talk with the demonstrators and explain what had happened, they shouted him down with curses and insults. Black leaders, aware of the youth's past conduct later agreed, that the dismissal on April 22 was justified. Nevertheless, the school was the scene of a nasty situation which could have turned into violence quickly. Ultimately, the young man was reinstated under the sponsorship of Grady Abrams. Responsible black leaders, especially WRDW newsman and disc jockey Ralph Stone, ascertained the true facts in the case and helped cool down the Negro community. Ironically, Thompson, the man being

accused of racism by the demonstrators, has done as much to help Augusta Negroes as any white man, and he directs the local Head Start program. Thompson's numerous friends in the black community offered their support, but it took some time before tempers cooled down.

"It was another indication," says Negro school principal I. E. Washington, "of the mood of the black community before the riot."

Some members of the Committee of 10 refer to the more militant Negroes in Augusta as "the dissidents." Although they refuse to identify elements of this group, one committee member flatly rejected the notion that the city was rank with Black Panthers before the riot.

"That's just not so," said Oliver. "If there are any Panthers here, you sure don't see them. The riot was an entire community speaking -- not a few people."

Lt. Thomas Olds, a Negro on the city's police force, also discounts the theory that numerous militants or Black Panthers were the cause of the violence. Olds said that "only one man in this town. . .even claims membership" in the Panthers.

Yet another incident that raised Negro anger occurred

May 4 when Mayor Millard Beckum summarily adjourned a meeting of the city council after Negroes began to press their grievances vocally on the council. Beckum left the room, but returned later with three other members of the council. According to many blacks, the Negro community was "affronted" by the mayor's action and by the failure of the entire city council to return to hear their complaints.

MONDAY, MAY 11

The violence occured exactly one week later on Monday, May 11, and it directly followed a tragic incident at the county jail -- already the focal point of intense hatred and fear on the part of many Augusta Negroes. At 8:08 p. m. on Saturday, May 9th, Charles Oatman, 16, a retarded Negro youth (his I.Q. was just below 60) who was charged with murdering his five year old niece and who had been in jail since March 30th, was taken DOA to the hospital. The police first said that he had fallen out of his bunk in the cell, but persons who viewed his body, including his father, the undertaker, and Richmond County Coroner's physician Dr. Irvin Phinizy knew that was not the case. Oatman's body bore the markings of torture, healed scars that looked to be the result of repeated cigarette burnings. And he had died from

a blow on the head. The coronor's report included the following description of the remains by Dr. Phinizy:

"Examination of the body revealed that he was quite thin and the general impression was that he was frail. There were multiple injuries to the cutaneous surfaces consisting of contusions, abrasions, scratches and minor lacerations. These lacerations included 1/2 inch laceration of the right occipital area that extended down to the skull, but from which there had been no recent bleeding. There were also roughly circular lesions that were healing burns that could have been caused by a cigarette pressed against the skin. These latter injuries involved the feet and the hands. There was minor contusion of both orbits. All skin lesions were of varying age. Some had completely healed and had apparently been inflicted several weeks before death. Others were more recent. . ."

Dr. Phinizy's report concluded that Oatman had died of "pulmonary edema, bilateral severe; and subdural hemorrhage, moderate, due to numerous severe beatings."

Obviously, the boy had been systematically tortured and then beaten to death. The news spread like wildfire. Oatman was well liked by his peers, and A. R. Johnson

Junior High School principal I. E. Washington described him as "not a trouble maker. He was liked." The undertaker who prepared the body for burial, and at least one other person who saw the body shortly after the boy was brought to the hospital, said that in addition to burn scars on the hands and feet there were about a dozen small holes in the boy's face, holes that could have been made by a fork.

"Nobody believed that he had fallen off his bunk and been killed like the police claimed," said one Negro resident. "It looked like he had been killed by the guards at the jail."

When the police later changed their story and charged two of Oatman's four cellmates with murder, blacks still refused to believe the boy had been killed without the guard's knowledge. The running feud between the county sheriff's department and the Negro residents in Augusta resulted in a total lack of communication and trust. Blacks had repeatedly complained about conditions in the county jail, particularly the practice of incarcerating juveniles there with hardened criminals.

Many people in Augusta quickly realized that the situation had become explosive. Black city councilman Grady

Abrams attempted to call Georgia Governor Lester Maddox on Sunday, May 10, to explain the situation, but he could not get through to the governor. On Monday morning, Maddox did return Abrams' call.

"He told me to keep things cool, and that he would send one of his representatives," said Abrams.

Later, it was revealed that Major Barney Ragsdale of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation then called Sheriff Atkins and offered what ever assistance was necessary to handle any disturbance, but he was told by the sheriff that no additional police were necessary.

Oatman's death occurred on Saturday, and by Sunday almost every black in the city was aware of the circumstances. The Negro community was in a depressed and angry mood, and when black leaders went to the city-county municipal building in mid-afternoon on Monday, May 11, a large crowd of Negroes, including many young people and students, followed. In a meeting with county commission head Matthew Mulherin, Negro leaders explained their complaints about the jail, and secured a promise that juveniles would no longer be detained there. They also took steps to clear up confusion among local government agencies as to who had the responsibiltiy

to act in certain areas. Several blacks later described it as a productive meeting, but when they went back outside to explain the results to the crowd, they found people in an angry mood.

"They weren't in any mood to listen to us," said Abrams. Several persons tried to restore order when young blacks tore down the Georgia State flag and burned it, but to no avail. The Reverend A. D. Sims, head of the local SCLC chapter, urged the crowd to meet for a rally at the corner of 9th and Gwinnett. The crowd then surged across the street, tearing down and burning an American flag, and headed for the downtown area of Broad Street, turning over garbage cans and shouting. The riot was on. The crowd, which numbered more than 500 at one time, created havoc on Broad, marching through a department store and turning over display counters. When the marchers reached 9th and Gwinnett, more Negroes gathered and the violence gradually escalated. The crowd began to throw rocks at passing motorists, and some Negroes began to charge passing automobiles, pulling drivers out and beating them. There were numerous incidents of Negroes saving whites from the mob, and some blacks hid white and Chinese in their homes until the crowd's violent mood

dissipated. More than fifty fires were set that afternoon and evening, and Tuesday morning, six black men were killed by police and scores of both black and whites injured. About 1 a. m. Tuesday morning, the governor sent in 1200 National Guardsmen and 150 state patrolmen. "They're going in with live ammunition." he said, "We're not going to tolerate anarchy in this state."

The inflamed, stuttering rhetoric of the governor did nothing to dampen the tempers of Augusta's exhausted and furious blacks. Maddox told the guardsmen and troopers "not to try to plead with any sniper to halt, but raze any building they're in to its very foundation if necessary to get them out." As the extent of the rioting became known, the governor waxed hysterical: "We're not going to tolerate this anarchy," he said. "The blood of those five (dead) is on the hands of the President, Congress, the Supreme Court justices, and religious and education leaders who have refused to be the Americans and Christians they ought to be, who don't have the guts and courage to stand up." Maddox decided the riot was the work of Black Panthers and the "communist's conspiracy" who wanted to "bring down the country." He added that anyone shooting at troopers or

guardsmen "had better be prepared to meet their Maker."

The governor's histrionics were to be expected. Both whites and blacks in Georgia have become more or less accustomed to his florid invective and stumbling grandiloquence, and he is a candidate for Lt. Governorship this year. There are reports that his popularity increased as a result of his inflamatory remarks. Maddox was obviously shaken by tales of snipers firing on policemen and firemen in Augusta. Many firemen seemed to feel they were being fired upon and abandoned their hoses in the Negro section, but a week after the riot not a single, concrete instance of sniper fire had been authenticated, and Augusta Fire Chief James G. Fitzgerald has since said reports of sniper fire were "exaggerated." No policemen, firemen, state patrolmen, or National Guardsmen were struck by gunfire. Negroes in Augusta are convinced that if blacks did any shooting, it was random pistol shots fired in the air, not at the whites. Yet Augusta newspapers, state newspapers, and the press in general carried accounts of the riots that made it sound as if there was a full scale war going on. Col. James E. Slayton, commander of the National Guard units in Augusta, went so far as to say that it was "sophisticated, guerilla

warfare," and Augusta civic and police officials said publicly that the sniping, looting, and burning were "well planned," a remark apparently based on the fact that most of the burning was confined to businesses owned by Chinese merchants or whites.

The six dead were determined, by Richmond County medical examiner Dr. Irvin Phinizy, to have been shot in the back. Phinizy was disputed by Dr. Joe Caldwell, an attending physician who had viewed several of the dead men Monday night. A state autopsy confirmed Phinizy's findings: the dead were all shot in the back with double-ought buckshot of the type used by Augusta police. Attempts to determine how the six died were made more difficult by the Augusta Police Department's refusal to release any but one of the official reports of the shootings. Such information is public record in Georgia, but Augusta police pleaded for more time, saying they were overworked "and just haven't had time to get to the reports yet." This was Friday, four days after the killings. Reporters from out of town newspapers fanned out through the Negro neighborhoods to find eyewitnesses to the shootings. Most of the people interviewed were black; few whites other then Augusta policemen were witness to any of

the deaths. From newspapers, wire reports, and personal interviews, the six apparently died in the following fashion:

Charles Mack Murphy, 39, struck seven times in the back by double-ought buckshot. Murphy was returning to his mother's home after leaving his job at a furniture store. The riots had already disrupted bus service to his neighborhood, so he walked. When he reached Pate's Liquor store on Milledgeville Road, a large crowd had gathered and some looting was taking place. Pate's is only a few blocks from Murphy's temporary residence with his mother. It is not clear whether he was actually taking part in the looting, but he died in a hail of bullets fired by police arriving on the scene. The rest of the crowd fled into the darkness. Murphy was the father of four children and he had recently returned to Augusta from Florida. His mother, Mrs. Carl Mack Murphy, said later that it "seems like he came home just to die." There is no evidence that Murphy had taken part in any of the earlier disturbances nor that he was even active in civil rights demonstrations of any kind.

William Wright, Jr., 18, struck five times in the

the back and three times elsewhere on the body by double-ought buckshot. He and a group of friends were "digging the action" at a filling station on the corner of Twigg and Florence. Negroes had almost demolished the station, and many were filling their cars with gas from the pumps. Wright's best friend, John Collier, 17, said he saw a police car coming and shouted for his companions to run. All did except for Wright. He hesitated and then began to walk toward the rear of the station. Collier said two police got out of the car. "They didn't say anything. One of them pumped the gun three times. . .quick. He shot William in the back. When it hit him, it kind of pushed him up in the air and his cap came off. He hit the ground with his arms straight up in the air. The other cop shot at me and one of my friends, Charles Black. I jumped over a fence and heard bullets hit it. I hollored at William to come on, but he was dead."

Wright was a dropout from Lucy Laney High School. He liked basketball, and he was very much interested in his girlfriend. He had been arrested once for driving a stolen car without a license, but the case was dismissed. Friends say he was not looting at the time. He was not known as a

civil rights activist. He was about seven blocks from his home at 213 Fargo Street when he was killed.

Mack Wilson, Jr., 45, a resident of Augusta for 20 years, was struck once in the back by double-ought buckshot. Wilson was reportedly shot while looting on 12th Street late at night. A friend who would only identify himself as "Shorty" said he had driven Wilson to the bar. He said Wilson was inside when a policeman came up and threw a spotlight into the building. He said the policeman called, "Come on out old man," and then fired two shots into the store. Wilson was found dead in Tin Cup Lane, a small, dirt road behind the bar much later. There is no evidence that Wilson had a weapon. He was a veteran of World War II, and an employe of the City of Augusta. He had no reputation as a civil rights advocate.

John Stokes, 19, struck nine times in the back by double-ought buckshot. Stokes was shot while looting Davis grocery store on the corner of Walker and Third streets. A witness told one reporter that about 20 young people were inside the store when the police came up. Everybody made it away but Stokes. One of the policemen was quoted as saying, "Get up nigger, you ain't dead yet." Stokes was

unarmed. Stokes, like Wright, was a high school dropout.

John Bennings, 28, struck once in the back and once on the arm by double-ought buckshot. He had been to a party that broke up late in the night, and when he went outside, friends said he discovered someone had stolen his car. Bennings and companion, Harry Johnson, 19, then went in search of the vehicle which, according to Johnson, they found at the corner of 15th and Tutt streets. Police were in the area, and they refused to believe that the car belonged to Bennings or that it had been stolen. Officers on the scene placed him under arrest, and while they were out of the patrol car arranging to have the other vehicle towed away, Bennings jumped and ran. A witness said police fired once, then waited until Bennings ran under a lamp post and fired again. The second shot killed him. Bennett lived at 2410 Fitten Street. He had been an unsuccessful student at A. R. Johnson Junior High School where he had gotten into minor trouble with schoolmates. Lately, he had been working as a caddy and odd-job man. Like Stokes and Wright, he was a school dropout.

Sammy L. McCullough, 20, struck twice in the back by shells of unidentified caliber. Dr. Larry Howard of the

State Crime Laboratory says there is no reason to assume the wounds were not caused by double-ought buckshot. Though no bullets were recovered, the bullet wounds were the same size as the wounds in the other victims, he said. In this case, however, McCullough was definitely shot twice. The other men could have been hit only once by a blast from a 12 gauge shotgun shell which contains nine pellets in each load of double-ought buckshot. McCullough was shot approximately three blocks from his home at 413 Gilbert Manor. His companion at the time of the shooting, Russell Cunningham, 20, a lifelong buddy, said he and McCullough had been watching a fire in a supermarket across Wrightsboro Road. Many people were around when the police arrived. Cunningham said he was walking toward his car, McCullough following, when he heard shots. He said he turned to find his friend falling. McCullough was a high school graduate.

The six dead -- none of whom were armed or menaced police -- give no accurate picture of the extent of the shooting that took place the night of May 11. More than 20 people, including the six, suffered gunshot wounds, many serious ones. Other persons were injured by mobs or debris. In all, perhaps 80 persons suffered injuries serious enough to

require medical attention, and many more suffered superficial wounds. In addition, some Negroes may have actually been hit by police fire and were afraid to turn themselves in to the hospital for treatment.

ALTERNATE TO VIOLENCE

The "riot" ended almost as quickly as it had begun. By the morning of Tuesday, May 11, police and National Guardsmen had the situation well in hand. There were sporadic incidents during the next few days, but the fury and energy of the crowd was spent. Parts of the town were in rubble. More than 50 businesses, many of them liquor stores or business operated by Chinese residents, were in ruins.

"It looked like Vietnam," said one Negro.

In a sense, it was a war. Negro leadership in the city, now including many of the more outspoken young blacks from the Committee of 10, met with city and county officials to attempt to gain some relief for the problems that plague the Negro community in the city. The press called the agreement a "Six Point Program." The Negro demands included:

---formation of a Human Relations Committee to work out racial problems;

---immediate hiring of more blacks in high level jobs

in the city and county government:

---overhaul of the county penal system:

---step up efforts to attract more industry into the black neighborhoods.

---regular meetings of blacks and local officials to work on problems between the races, a feature combined into the activities of the Human Relations Committee which, incidently, the Negroes want to have the power of subpeona.

Most blacks in Augusta seemed to think the program was reasonable, but outsiders were shocked to find that the city didn't already have a human relations committee. Negroes in the meanwhile were adopting a cautious "wait and see" attitude, although many doubted that the white community would deliver. The violence, however, may well have shocked the city's frightened whites sufficiently for them to see the need for immediate and forthright action.

The wounds in the city's Negro community are deep. They will not be eradicated by a mere agreement on paper or the privilege, as one black city councilman put it, "of eating breakfast with the whites." It will require much more than breakfast, much more than agreements and handshakes and statements of goodwill. It will require action,

positive action that involves the entire white and black community of the city.

In Augusta, as elsewhere in America, white men engage in oppression half-consciously, almost as if unaware of what they are doing. Present any competent white businessman with similar data of a financial venture as that which has been gathered on racism in Augusta and he will react promptly and efficiently to correct matters. Yet this same white man, when confronted by overwhelming evidence of racial injustice, balks. He assumes that the data are wrong. It is as if he can only see the reality of the Negro plight through blind, blasted, cataracted eyes. In many ways, the white man has become the victim of his own duplicity, his own proclivity to racial rhetoric and doubletalk. He does not believe in what he himself says in relation to the Negro, and he has become so accustomed to operating on half-truths and lies in racial matters that perhaps he has lost the ability to tell or even see the truth. How else can one explain the unwillingness or the inability of Augusta whites to see that temperatures in the city's Negro community were rising steadily prior to the night of May 11? How else can the white civic officials' inaction be understood? Far from

being a sudden confrontation, the Augusta riots were the results of centuries of racial injustice and a gathering, slowly building, gradually escalating series of encounters with an indifferent and disinterested white establishment, manifested in a string of incidents that went back to December of 1969 and marched, in steady, obvious procession through almost each succeeding month up to May 11. Georgia Bureau of Investigation officials said they knew trouble was brewing in Augusta long before the riot took place, yet nothing was done to relieve the situation. The assertion that there was nothing which could have been done because of a handful of local militants is absurd. Steps could have been taken both to relieve the tension in the black community and to move toward establishing an incipient trust between the two races in Augusta. Communication between blacks and whites in the city was so bad that the series of incidents almost resulted in violence a half dozen times between January and May. Regardless of the activity of a few militants (and even police concede that there are few of those in Augusta), if conditions weren't genuinely bad the people would not likely have gone along with and taken part in the violence. (Police estimates of militant activists

or "Black Panther types" in Augusta vary, but most seem to think that the city has about 80 violence-prone blacks. GBI agents say they noted an increase in "Black Panther like activity" for several weeks prior to the night of May 11. Wilbert Allen, most often identified as the city's one true militant, was arrested by Augusta police during the disturbances and charged with inciting to riot. He is free on $25,000 bail.) Negroes leaders in Augusta tend to discount the theory that the young people in the riot were motivated primarily by militant philosophy.

Regardless of the causes of the disturbance, elected officials and all residents of Augusta could go a long way toward making their city a better place for both whites and blacks if they would only take an active part in implementing the Six Point Program and seeing that all persons in social and economic distress in the community get a chance to better their conditions.

Specifically, immediate steps should be taken to:

---relieve overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in housing. This is a number one priority problem in the city. (Most Augusta blacks live in shacks most whites would be afraid to strike a match in.) The

city and the county need to firmly enforce a strict Housing Code, and ferret out absentee slumlords who are getting rich off the misery of other men;

---provide for more and better municipal services, garbage, sewers, and the like, to all Negro residential areas;

---hire blacks for other than menial jobs, and give them a fair opportunity for advancement in those jobs;

---support the program of the local Office of Equal Opportunity and see that all Negro children are afforded an educational opportunity equal to that of the white children;

---cease cultural discrimination against blacks in education, employment, and political affairs, and provide for a permanent organization of communication between members of the Negro and white races in the city;

---begin a thorough study of police activity during the riot, including specifically the fatal shootings of the six Negro men, and examining in detail the normal processes of legal justice as applied to the

local black community.

Particularly needing correction is the practice of placing juveniles in the county jail. One of Charles Oatman's companions in the county jail was a 13-year-old Negro boy who was released the day before the murder. He has since told of severe beatings at the jail, and of threats, and a game in which the other inmates force another to stand up against a wall and smash his head with shoes and belts. This child was detained in jail not because he had committed a crime, but only because he was a witness to one. Two cellmates of Oatman have also subsequently told of a bizarre game of cards played in the cell in which the loser was beaten and tortured. They said that Oatman, because of his low intelligence, almost always lost.

On the basis of available evidence, police action during the disorder was inexcusable. The shooting of the six Negroes -- none of whom were armed and none of whom were threatening police -- is a tragic and deplorable miscarriage of justice. Almost no members of the town's 130-man police force have had riot training, and far more force than necessary was used to still the disorder. In fact, the police first seemed to react too slowly to the gathering

disturbance and then, when they did react, they over-reacted, shooting many more people than the six men who were actually killed. Just as the causes and inner-workings of a violent racial disorder are involved and complex, so is the technique required to handle those disorders complex. Augusta police, if properly trained, should have been able to stop the violence long before it escalated from the shouting, rock throwing stage to burning and looting.

Officials in the city have hinted that they have evidence of an organized clique of "dissidents" who stock-piled firebombs weeks in advance, waiting for an excuse to use them against whites. A week after the disorder, these assertions were still rumors and police had yet to produce any evidence of organization. Most eyewitnesses tend to discount the theories of militant activity. Older Negroes also dismiss the common opinion that young blacks were angry over the progress of the Vietnam War and were, in fact, reacting to the Cambodian invasion.

"Black folks in Augusta don't have time to worry about the war," said Grady Abrams. "We got a situation right here that demands all of our attention. We got to survive. I don't want to see my children grow up and have to put up

with all this jive."

Nevertheless, young people did play a prominent role in the night of violence. In Augusta, as elsewhere, young black students are dissaffected with the nation's Vietnam War policy, and shocked by the Kent State tragedy. Paine College, the traditional center of civil rights activism in the city, was closed a few days after the riots, and city police gave an audible sigh of relief. The schools white president, Dr. E. Clayton Calhoun, the last white president of a Negro college in America, announced his resignation a few weeks before the disturbance. The intense feeling of polarization of the races is as prevalent in Augusta, particularly among the young, as anywhere in the United States. Governor Maddox, two days after the violence in Augusta, seemed to purposely widen this breach when he told a group of Georgia law enforcement officers that he was "sick of cowards. I'm sick of fence-straddlers We're in a war, and a war at home."

Obviously, many Augusta Negroes agree with him.

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Undoubtedly, most Americans, white or black, will look upon the violence in Augusta as the first race riot of

the year. Although the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders warns against lumping racial disorders in one category of civil strife, the chaos in Augusta did bear haunting similarities to the major disturbances of the summer of 1967.* It was as if the people involved were following a script or acting out roles in a seasonal ritual. There was the series of "incidents," piled on top of centuries of oppression and rejection, then the big "incident." The Incident was followed by the gradually escalating, all-too-familiar pattern of violence, from marching and shouting to rock throwing, beatings, overturning of cars, burning, looting, and finally, the overreaction of the police and the shootings. Then the white "leaders" and the black "leaders" got together and worked out the "Six Point Program." (Why is there always a Six Point Program?) The setting was familiar too: the dilapidated, paintless little shacks, the Negroes standing on the street corner or sitting idly on their porches, watching the silent National Guardsmen strolling up and down the street. Although it was the first time in more than half a century that Georgia has had a major racial disorder, the people all seemed to know their

* See appendix

parts perfectly. Nothing was out of order. Like most Americans, the residents of Augusta have become sort of lay experts on riots.

"It's from the TV," said one reporter covering Augusta. "They've seen it all on television and they know what they are supposed to do. It sounds crazy, but I think that's what's happening."

"No, that's not it," said a television reporter. "We've just covered so many of these things until the people look like they know how to act. Actually, they're doing it naturally. This ain't a play. This is real. We're the one who have become so cynical that it doesn't seem real."

JACKSON STATE COLLEGE

By

Ed Williams

JACKSON STATE

The deaths of two young black men at Jackson State College May 15, following other slayings at Kent State and in Augusta, Ga., seem part of a national surge of violence which is taking the lives of America's disaffected, the anti-war students and the blacks. From a distance, at least, that pattern seems clear. But explanation totally in terms of malevolent forces and national moods is not sufficient.

In Jackson, as still throughout much of the South, old grievances, old wounds that are the heritage of a century must be taken into account in any evaluation of police and black student conflict. At Jackson State almost precisely three years earlier students had clashed with police in an incident that broke out when Jackson police came on campus in pursuit of a student who was alleged to have been speeding. Students at the time had seen the police intrusion as illustrative of the fact that the Jackson police did not respect the sovereignty of the campus security force. The violence of May, 1970, however, was not traceable to one single event.

In the late night hours of Wednesday, May 13, 1970, young blacks, some of them probably Jackson State students and some street-corner toughs, began pelting cars on Lynch Street with rocks and bottles. Jackson police blocked access to a long segment of Lynch, a broad east-west thoroughfare in south Jackson which bisects the campus of Jackson State, a predominantly black (it has a smattering of whites) college of 4,500 in a black business and residential area.

Around midnight, the situation worsened. State highway patrolmen moved onto the campus. A bonfire burned on Lynch, and lawmen reported barrages of rocks and bottles. Officials later reported an abortive foray by blacks with the ROTC building as the apparent target. But the campus grew quiet in the early morning hours.

What started the trouble? Although the student government had organized a war protest a few days earlier, the disorder Wednesday night did not stem from a demonstration. It just erupted, without an immediate discernible cause. "It's a lot of things,"" said, one student standing at a police roadblock. "The war, Cambodia, the draft, the governor, Mississippi. It's not just any one thing."

About 10:30 the next night, the rock and bottle throwing began anew. Police, aided by state highway patrolmen and National Guardsman called to duty as a back-up force by Gov. John Bell Williams, again blocked Lynch and other streets leading onto campus. Shortly before midnight, someone set fire to a dump truck parked for the night beside a sewage work site on Lynch. A city fire-truck was summoned.

Jerry DeLaughter, Jackson correspondent for the Memphis, Tenn., Commercial-Appeal, was at a roadblock one block north of Lynch when the firetruck pulled onto campus. DeLaughter said he saw a rapid series of flashes and heard reports which sounded like gunfire, coming from the darkness nearby; but no one was hit, and apparently no gunshots -- if they were gunshots -- struck the fire truck.

Highway patrolmen and Jackson police also arrived on campus about midnight, travelling on Lynch. A contingent of about 75 highway patrolmen, armed and garbed in riot gear, moved from the burning truck east on Lynch to a spot near the front of Alexander Hall, a women's dormitory whose three wings form a trapezoid on the north side of the street with Lynch as the long base.

A crowd of young blacks -- students and non-students, men and women -- had gathered in the inner yard of Alexander and near the entrance at the southwest end of the dormitory. Both men and women were inside. The patrolmen stopped, witnesses say, and faced Alexander.

Then without warning the scene exploded. Gunfire erupted, first in a sputter then quickly in a deafening roar lasting a full thirty seconds. Students fled, stumbled and fell over one another, seeking cover.

Then the guns were silent.

Two blacks were found dead after the firing stopped: 21-year-old Phillip L. Gibbs, a JSC junior, married, father of an 11-month-old son; and 17-year-old James Earl Green, a local high school senior, whose sister said he had just received a tentative offer of a track scholarship to UCLA. Gibbs was found in the yard at Alexander, near the southwest entrance. Green was found across Lynch, near the cafeteria.

Bert Case and Jack Hobbs, newsmen for Jackson television station WJTV, were within yards of the highway patrolmen when the shooting erupted. Hobbs recalls hearing what he thought was a bullet from the direction of Alexander "whiz by" him and ricochet off the concrete behind him. A

bottle crashed to the pavement about the same time. Then the barrage began.

Case and Hobbs filmed and sound-taped the events of the tragic minutes. The tape records and the sound of shouting from the students and of the bottle crashing to the pavement. In addition, it has two sharp popping sounds, (which some speculate may have been the firing of the bullet Hobbs recalls) then the heavier sounds of police gunfire. No order to begin firing is heard on the tape although a "cease firing" order is heard.

Fifteen hours later, Jackson Mayor Russell Davis said newsmen, state and local police reported gunfire on campus and from Alexander dormitory before the lawmen opened fire. "The reports state that at the same time as the sniper fire occurred a highway patrolman was knocked down by a brick or rock. . . and several other officers had been hit by bricks prior to the time the firing began," Davis said. "The reports state that there was no command to fire given by the officers in charge."

Governor Williams, in a thirty-minute statewide television address a week after the deaths, said "There is evidence of sniper activity immediately preceding the outburst

and the officers were subjected to numerous barrages of missiles hurled by members of the mob on campus. Several officers were struck by flying missiles.

"There is evidence that an officer was struck, that he was felled and momentarily stunned by a flying object. Almost simultaneous with the reported sniper fire, this officer dropped and then the officers returned the fire." The Governor called the highway patrolmen "professional officers all -- highly experienced. These men are not hotheads and they are not given to losing their heads under stress."

M. B. Pierce, chief of detectives for the Jackson police department, said the officers who fired were "returning fire from snipers. I can't say whether one specific incident prompted them to fire, but prior to that time they had been receiving fire. There was certainly a tremendous amount of sniper fire." The highway patrol has refused to comment publicly on the incident.

Other eyewitnesses dispute the accounts of "a tremendous amount of sniper fire." Four newsmen who entered the campus with the lawmen say they recall hearing what could have been sniper fire on two occassions: First, when

the firetruck entered; and second, in front of Alexander seconds before the police volley.

"I was down here in front of the dorm, "a black coed said the morning after the deaths. "We saw the cops coming and said, 'Aw, we'll just stay here. . . they ain't gonna do nothing but shoot some tear gas." But there was no tear gas, and there was no attempt to disperse the crowd -- all witnesses agree on those points. And the dozens of student eyewitnesses emphatically deny charges of sniper fire.

Farris Adams, a 26-year old-former JSC student who was on campus the night of the shooting, said shortly before midnight an unidentified black man came by Stewart Hall, a men's dorm, and told residents that Charles Evers and his wife had been gunned down in Natchez. That rumor set off an emotional reaction which led to setting fire to the dump truck, Adams said.

Gregory Antoine, a 19-year-old JSC sophomore, said he had taken a bull horn from a campus security policeman to try to encourage students to stay in the dorms and off the street. He followed patrolmen, walking along the south side of Lynch. When they turned to face Alexander, he was

behind them. "Next thing I knew the sky lit up," he recalled. After the shooting, "First thing they did was pick up the shells laying on the ground." He thinks both highway patrolmen and city police were firing.

All witnesses agree that none of the estimated 500 National Guardsmen called to the campus participated in the shooting. Recollections of whether city police fired differ, but all witnesses agree most of the firing was done by the highway patrolmen.

Despite the official reports of substantial sniper fire, there have been no reports of any lawman wounded by gunfire, or of any equipment or vehicle used by police or the National Guard being hit by sniper fire. Information concerning the bullets which killed the two men has not been made public.

The southwest end of Alexander, which houses an enclosed stairwell, is no more than fifty feet from mid-Lynch Street. All five floors of that end are riddled with bullet holes, apparently from rifles or large shotgun pellets. I counted 150 separate holes in the walls, windows, and aluminum panels beneath the double windows. The heavy glass double doors on the ground floor were

shattered. One panel of the double window on the second floor was shot almost completely out, as were both windows on the fourth floor and one on the fifth. All windows on that end of the dormitory, and all the panels under them, were riddled with bullet holes.

INVESTIGATIONS AND REACTIONS

No one has suggested that either of the men killed or any of the dozen blacks wounded had anything to do with the reported sniping.

Mayor Davis appointed a biracial committee -- two black lawyers, three white lawyers -- to investigate. Before the Mayor announced the composition of the committee, Alex Waites, state NAACP field secretary, told newsmen that a committee on which whites outnumbered blacks would be unacceptable to the black community. But Reuben Anderson, one of the blacks on the committee, said he accepted the appointment because he doubted that the Mayor would offer a more balanced alignment and thought the committee could do some good.

The Mayor said he had no way to give the committee subpoena power, but he said he would instruct city employes to cooperate in the investigation, and urge state

police to do the same.

However, City Commissioner Edward Cates dispatched a memorandum to city employes saying the biracial committee "is illegal and has no legal powers whatsoever. This is to further advise you that no one is required or can be made to appear before the same to testify, and failure to do so cannot result in any punitive action against you."

Twenty city policemen balked at testifying before the committee until the Mayor assured them it wouldn't be the vehicle for any legal action. "Nobody is going to tell them anything," one officer said. "We have nothing to hide, but if they want us to talk, they'll have to bring us before a grand jury." Davis assured them the committee would not supercede the grand jury. The Mayor asked the committee to report its findings in ten days.

Probes by the city, the FBI and the Justice Department's civil rights division were announced within hours of the deaths. Attorney General John Mitchell had already scheduled a speech on Tuesday to the traditionally all-white Delta Council, a 17-county economic development group which meets annually at Delta State College in Cleveland, 150 miles northwest of here. He came to

Jackson the day before his speech to confer with Mayor Davis and Dr. John Peoples, president of Jackson State. They talked for two hours, but spoke nothing but platitudes to newsmen afterward, and refused to answer any questions. That night, Mitchell met briefly with Gov. John Bell Williams following a dinner for Delta Council directors in Indianola.

Tuesday at Cleveland, Mitchell told the Delta planter audience, "This is a nation determined to live within the law." Neither violent demonstrations nor unrestrained reactions are part of that law." He said the deaths at Jackson State and Kent State are under "urgent investigation." Meanwhile, 75 blacks led by state NAACP President Aaron Henry marched in protest on the campus. Mitchell didn't see them,

Governor John Bell Williams responded to the deaths with a traditional "violence begets nothing but grief" statement. Mayor Davis, haggard and visibly shaken, said "This is the darkest day of my life. . . Events of recent weeks in our nation, including this one this morning, should point out that whenever people resort to the streets for whatever cause and armed men are sent into the area to restore order, disaster such as we have suffered is likely to explode. . . ."

Rep. Robert Clark, the only black in the state legislature, protested "the killing and indiscriminate firing upon black students. . . .It appears to me that the hail of gunfire directed against women could under no conceivable circumstances have been justifiable or lawful. I doubt the propriety of sending armed officials into the area in the first place."

State NAACP Field Secretary Alex Waites said, "We cannot find justification for shooting fleeing students regardless of provocation."

THE SILENCE OF THE HIGHWAY PATROL

The highway patrol has refused to make any public statement. That's not suprising. Two months ago, a highway patrolman took a drunk to the emergency room of University Hospital here. He ordered a black orderly to go to the car and bring the man in. The orderly, busy with other tasks, said he would have to check with his supervisor. That angered the patrolman, and he smashed the orderly in the face, knocking him over a patient in a wheelchair. Two white interns rushed up, and the patrolman pulled his gun, waved it at the interns, then arrested them. The dean of the University Medical

Center came to the emergency room, and highway patrol officials arrived soon afterward.

Arrest charges were dropped, and a brief highway patrol investigation ensued. The result: the patrolman was transferred from Jackson to Natchez; no fine, no suspension.

Newsmen who had talked to eyewitnesses at the hospital pressed the patrol for a statement. Finally it came: "We are aware of an incident and we have taken what we think are appropriate disciplinary measures to correct any improprieties that may have occured." That was all.

The Mississippi-Louisiana Associated Press Association, meeting the weekend following the Jackson State deaths, protested the patrol's traditional sealed-lips policy. The association said "the people's right to know . . . is being seriously impaired" in events in which the patrol is involved. The association urged the Governor to "recognize the present insufficiencies in the proper relations between the patrol and the press...."

The official silence of the highway patrol leaves public assessment of their role to unquestioning patrol

backers and shocked patrol critics. The real story of the stresses a lawman comes under when he is in the midst of a hostile crowd, pelted periodically with rocks and bottles, possibly the target of unseen snipers, may be told in official reports; the patrol's determined silence keeps it from being told here.

But the veil of silence did slip at least once, unofficially. A long-haired teenage boy was selling copies of Kudzu, the Jackson underground newspaper, near the Governor's Mansion. The front page was a picture of the bullet-riddled dormitory, under the headline "Jackson State Massacre."

A patrolman stared at the paper. "What would you have done?" demanded the patrolman bitterly. "What would you have done if they'd hit you with rocks and shot at you?"

Civil rights leaders have long criticized the patrol's conduct in civil rights matters. A suit filed this month in federal court here, for example, charges four patrolmen and others with cursing, beating and threatening the lives of blacks involved in boycotts in Rankin and Simpson Counties. Fayette Mayor Charles Evers, former NAACP field

secretary, has singled out one patrol official for special criticism: Lloyd Jones, a big (6-3, 250-pound), 41-year-old veteran of 14 years on the patrol. Jones is the inspector in charge of the eight-county First highway patrol district, which includes Simpson and Rankin Counties and the city of Jackson.

"He was there last night, and he was there when Ben Brown was shot down," Evers told a black gathering the night after the deaths. Ben Brown was a 22-year-old black civil rights worker who was slain by police bullets on Lynch Street during disorders three years ago. Evers called for a black delegation to go to the Governor and demand Jones' suspension.

Ten days before the deaths at Jackson State, attorneys for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law took a deposition from Jones in connection with the Rankin County suit. Some of his comments take on added significance in the aftermath of Jackson State. James Robertson of the Lawyers Committee asked the questions, and Jones replied:

Question--Does riot gear always involve a shotgun or a rifle?

Answer--Yes, sir.

Q--One or the other?

A--Yes, sir.

Q--Is that standard patrol procedure?

A--Yes, sir.

Q--Can you think of a situation involving a public disturbance or a potential public disturbance in which you would not arm your men, or that you would disarm your men?

A--No, sir. The weapons are for the men's protection. For my men's protection. I have been hit with bricks and bottles and everything else in the last seven or eight years.

Q--How did you stop that -- with a shotgun?

A--Yes, sir.

Q--You did stop that with a shotgun?

A--Yes, sir.

Q--Because of the threat of a shotgun? Is that what?

A--Sometimes that would stop them and sometimes we fired over their heads.

Q--That was the way guns were used here in Jackson in 1967? The Ben Brown killing?

A--Yes, sir.

In the deposition, Jones also testified that all the approximately 375 state patrolmen are white and that the

patrol has no formal procedure for investigating charges of officer misconduct or for disciplining officers.

A week after the deaths, Charles Evers said black leaders had lodged no formal complaint against Jones, nor had they officially sought his suspension. "We're gathering evidence," Evers said.

IN THE AFTERMATH

At the invitation of Evers and other black leaders, numerous national political leaders visited the Jackson State College to view the bullet-scarred dormitory and talk to students. Among the visitors: Senators Edward Brooke, Walter Mondale and Birch Bayh, Congressmen Don Edwards and William Clay, NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins, Washington lawyer Joseph Rauh, Jr., and Bob Bates, a member of Sen. Edward Kennedy's staff.

The funeral of James Green at the Masonic Temple on Lynch Street a week after his death attracted numerous other celebrities, all flown here on a jet chartered by Sen. Edward Muskie. Among the passengers were Senators Charles Percy, Daniel Inouye, Ralph Yarbrough, Thomas Eagleton, Phillip Hart, Harold Hughes, and Claiborne Pell; Congressmen John Anderson, Jeffery Cohelan, John Conyers, Jr., Charles Diggs, Jr., Robert Eckhart, Abner Mikva, William Moorhead, Adam Clayton

Powell, Henry Reuss, and William Steiger; others included W. Averill Harriman, Urban League Director Whitney Young, former Boston Celtic basketball star Sam Jones, and pro football players Lonnie Sanders and James Snowden.

Rep. G. V. Montgomery of Mississippi, angered by the influx of politicians, blasted "outside interference from politicians who would do well to put their own house in order first" and called their trip "an attempt to make political hay out of the tragic events. . . ." Montgomery did not attend the funeral or visit the campus.

Governor Williams responded in the same vein. "We've been invaded by swarms of senators and congressmen and self-appointed experts and self-appointed judges of the people of Mississippi; and all of these have found our people guilty before they even left Washington, and then they found them guilty publicly here in front of a highly cooperative and hopelessly biased national press. . . . The hyprocrisy of this publicity stunt. . . might well have perpetrated a cruel hoax upon the bereaved families and friends of the victims," Williams said. The Governor did not attend the funeral or visit the campus.

State Rep. Charles Mitchell of Jackson took a similar view: "Sen. Muskie and a group of political vultures are flying in from their roost in Washington, D. C.," Mitchell said. "They come as scavengers to glean every political advantage from this problem...." Mitchell did not attend the funeral or visit the campus.

Charles Evers said he had invited the visitors, and "regardless of what state officials say, they are welcome."

Sen. Muskie said he came "at the suggestion of Mayor Evers. He felt it was important to indicate there is much concern about violence on campuses in all parts of the country."

There is much concern in Jackson, too, and it takes many forms. Governor Williams called up more than a thousand National Guardsmen for stand-by duty in Jackson, and he alerted a reported 10,000 others for possible call-up.

State highway patrolmen, most of them veterans of the Jackson State incident, kept a round-the-clock vigil at the Governor's Mansion, and city police worked long shifts.

Young black pickets marched in front of white-owned stores, carrying signs telling black shoppers to stay away in support of a city-wide boycott.

A rash of firebombings broke out, eight in the week following the deaths. The targets were white-owned businesses in predominantly black areas.

Millsaps College, a predominantly white, church-sponsored institution here, permanently disarmed its campus security force after one staff member reported hearing a patrolman say he would use his gun if students gave him any trouble. Two patrolmen quit, but others stayed on duty, wearing empty holsters.

The state college board dismissed classes at Jackson State for the remainder of the semester, cancelling graduation and alumni day activities.

The state National Guard Association postponed a convention which would have brought to Jackson more than 900 officers from throughout the state.

Rumors of turmoil and violence in the public schools spread throughout the city, prompting officials to open a rumor center which parents could call to get facts about tales of trouble. Mayor Davis dismissed public schools here May 21 and 22, the day before and the day of Green's funeral.

Reaction to the deaths in Jackson's black community

seems to be coalescing around two groups, the traditional black leadership and the students. Today, the groups are working together. Tomorrow, they may not be.

Charles Evers and Alex Waites are prominent among the leadership of blacks who are firmly committed to non-violence. Evers has cooled Jackson before when black feelings approached fever point. Evers, whose brother was slain by sniper fire in Jackson during the initial civil rights struggle of the early 1960s, believes in racial integration and the accumulation of black power through economics and politics.

"The streets in Jackson ain't safe for no black man, or no white man who believes in justice and equality," Evers told 1,500 blacks who gathered Sunday, May 17, in the blood-stained yard of Alexander. But he urged students not to take to the streets. "The Man understands two kinds of power," he had said earlier, "economic power and voting power."

But to a growing number of young blacks, it's obvious that The Man understands and uses a third kind of power when the first two fail: violence. Many young blacks are losing faith in the idea of peaceful change through

the ballot, the boycott and the courts.

For young black students like John Donald and Degecha X, the events of the past week have caused a critical examination of the course black activism has taken and is to take in Mississippi.

John Donald, a Navy veteran from Jackson, is a law student at the University of Mississippi. He was suspended from school earlier in the semester for taking part in a black demonstration which interrupted a campus musical, but he was reinstated pending a federal court review of the suspension. His brother Cleveland enrolled at Ole Miss soon after James Meredith.

"I woke up at four o'clock in the morning, thinking about all this," Donald told a friend on Lynch Street the Sunday following the killings. "I've had to rethink my whole life. If this can still happen, a law degree's not relevant, college is not relevant. It makes no difference."

Degecha X, a Jackson State student from Hattiesburg, emerged as a leader in protest demonstrations following the killings. He spoke forcefully at planning meetings, his speeches filled with references to "pigs" and "honkies." He was the apparent leader of five hundred students who

ringed the Governor's Mansion in silent protest the Monday after the killings.

He had resisted reporters' attempts at earlier interviews, and had angrily demanded that television lights be extinguished at an earlier press conference. But he talked to two reporters in a sparsely-furnished upstairs room that serves as the Kudzu office.

He spoke of the new mood emerging in the black community. "I'm sure Brother Evers realizes his philosophy has reached a point where it's crying in the night," he said. "It's a hopeless effort. . . .He is intelligent enough to know we can't continue to love and embrace an adversary that continues to inflict pain (on us)."

"The white man will have to understand we're here and can't go anywhere else. He brought us here. He has to understand he was our model. He kept us in bondage. He kept us fighting one another. This animosity he has created is now detouring from the black community. The blacks are going to have to turn their animosity toward their true adversary, and it's not going to take a bunch of outside agitators. There are young blacks here today who can act in the capacity of agitator without involve-

ment from outside. No matter how the white man preaches this crap about communist inspiration, that's a bunch of crap. The average black don't know a thing about communism."

". . .There's got to be a new youthful involvement here. The old pacifist Negro will have to take a back seat and more or less advise and observe. His type of leadership has been in harmony with plans of the white power structure. The black community has continued to step off on the wrong foot on every take-off."

". . .I'm sure the majority of the black community realizes there's not going to be any justice," he said. "Therefore, this should bring the black community closer together. . . ."

". . .The white man has controlled by fear. When the white man can no longer control by fear or intimidation, he tends to resort to more devastating methods such as the atrocity at Jackson State. The recent event was done to reinforce fear in the black community, to let young blacks know who's in charge. This strategy is going to backfire. I think he somewhat underestimated the young black man," said Degecha X.

* * *

There is an almost irresistable tendency to look for parallels between Jackson State and Kent State. Here is my view:

The real similarities and differences between the two tragedies are best seen by comparing the symbolic roles of the antagonists on both campuses.

The highway patrol at Jackson State and the National Guard at Kent State were forces dispatched to establish order and protect property. Both were backed by, in a phrase favored by Governor Williams, "the majesty of the law." Students who did not cooperate with these forces, then, were lawbreakers, in the eyes of the lawmen.

The highway patrol and the National Guard were representatives of white establishment America, thrown into an alien, hostile environment against an enemy hiding among a large mass of innocent bystanders. The role of the lawmen: to establish order. Their method: strike at the enemy. The result: the deaths of several bystanders, none of whom is accused of anything other than being present when the shooting started.

Because they did not retreat when confronted by duly constituted authorities, the students on both campuses got

what they asked for, in the cold, quasi-legalistic view of many Americans.

Such a view ignores both law and humanity.

Few lawmen would suggest that the proper response to rocks and bottles, even to an unseen sniper, is to fire point-blank into a mass of milling students. And if, in the final analysis, law allows such a response, humanity does not. If that is our best method of dealing with angry college students, law and justice have become hollow words, for a withering volley of gunfire does not distinguish between the guilty and the innocent. The men sworn to uphold the law, then, have become as lawless as the mob they see before them.

The confrontation at Jackson State is further complicated by the problem of race. Any confrontation between a white lawman and a black man in Mississippi is necessarily a racial confrontation. One hundred and fifty years of history, with its myths and horrors, make it so.

A deposition taken by the Lawyers Committee here contains an exchange between a lawyer and a highway patrolman about the use of the term "nigger". The lawyer asks if the patrolman considers it an offensive term, and the

patrolman replies "No, sir." The patrol has no policy about use of that term, the patrolman says, and he uses it several times during the taking of the deposition.

A black man who breaks a law, or is suspected of breaking a law, is more than merely a lawbreaker to many white Mississippi lawmen; he is a "nigger" lawbreaker, and that makes a difference.

In the eyes of white Mississippi, a black man who angrily throws a rock at a highway patrolman is more dangerous than a black service station attendant who kills a black tractor driver in a Saturday night brawl. That fact makes any confrontation between angry young blacks and white Mississippi lawmen a potential tragedy.

Possible solutions? Rep. Robert Clark, the only black in the Mississippi legislature, suggested a third force; when blacks seem on the verge of violence, other blacks should step in. "We don't want any more armed white men on black campuses," said Clark. "They've proved they don't know what to do. We do."

APPENDIX

Excerpts from the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

Based upon information derived from our surveys, we offer the following generalizations.

1. No civil disorder was "typical" in all respects. Viewed in a national framework, the disorders of 1967 varied greatly in terms of violence and damage: while a relatively small number were major under our criteria and a somewhat larger number were serious, most of the disorders would have recieved little or no national attention as "riots" had the nation not been sensitized by the more serious outbreaks.

2. While the civil disorders of 1967 were racial in character, they were not interracial. The 1967 disorders, as well as earlier disorders of the recent period, involved action within Negro neighborhoods against symbols of white American society--authority and property--rather than against white persons.

3. Despite extremist rhetoric, there was no attempt to subvert the social order of the United States. Instead, most of those who attacked white authority and property

seemed to be demanding fuller participation in the social order and the material benefits enjoyed by the vast majority of American citizens.

4. Disorder did not typically erupt without preexisting causes, as a result of a single "triggering" or "precipitating" incident. Instead, it developed out of an increasingly disturbed social atmosphere, in which typically a series of tension-heightening incidents over a period of weeks or months became linked in the minds of many in the Negro community with a shared network of underlying grievances.

5. There was, typically, a complex relationship between the series of incidents and the underlying grievances. For example, grievances about allegedly abusive police practices, unemployment and underemployment, housing and other conditions in the ghetto, were often aggravated in the minds of many Negroes by incidents involving the police, or the inaction of municipal authorities on Negro complaints about police action, unemployment, inadequate housing or other conditions. When grievance-related incidents recurred and rising tensions were not satisfactorily resolved, a cumulative process took place in which prior incidents were readily recalled and grievances reinforced. At some point in the mounting tension, a further incident--in itself often

routine or even trivial--became the breaking point, and tension spilled into violence.

6. Many grievances in the Negro community result from the discrimination, prejudice and powerlessness which Negroes often experience. They also result from the severely disadvantaged social and economic conditions of many Negroes as compared with those of whites in the same city and, more particularly, in the predominantly white suburbs.

7. Characteristically, the typical rioter was not a hoodlum, habitual criminal, or riffraff; nor was he a recent migrant, a member of an uneducated underclass, or a person lacking broad social and political concerns. Instead, he was a teen-ager or young adult, a lifelong resident of the city in which he rioted, a high-school drop-out--but somewhat better educated than his Negro neighbor--and almost invariably underemployed or employed in a menial job. He was proud of his race, extremely hostile to both whites and middle-class Negroes and, though informed about politics, highly distrustful of the political system and of political leaders.

8. Numerous Negro counter-rioters walked the streets urging rioters to "cool it." The typical counter-rioter resembled in many respects the majority of Negroes, who

neither rioted nor took action against the rioters, that is, the non-involved. But certain differences are crucial: the counter-rioter was better educated and had higher income than either the rioter or the noninvolved.

9. Negotiations between Negroes and white officials occurred during virtually all the disorders surveyed. The negotiations often involved young, militant Negroes as well as older, established leaders. Despite a setting of chaos and disorder, negotiations in many cases involved discussion of underlying grievances as well as the handling of the disorder by control authorities.

10. The chain we have identified--discrimination, prejudice, disadvantaged conditions, intense and pervasive grievances, a series of tension-heightening incidents, all culminating in the eruption of disorder at the hands of youthful, politically-aware activists--must be understood as describing the central trend in the disorders, not as an explanation of all aspects of the riots or of all rioters. Some rioters, for example, may have shared neither the conditions nor the grievances of their Negro neighbors; some may have coolly and deliberately exploited the chaos created by others; some may have been drawn into the melee merely because they identified with, or wished to emulate,

others. Nor do we intend to suggest that the majority of the rioters, who shared the adverse conditions and grievances, necessarily articulated in their own minds the connection between that background and their actions.

11. The background of disorder in the riot cities was typically characterized by severely disadvantaged conditions for Negroes, especially as compared with those for whites; a local government often unresponsive to these conditions; federal programs which had not yet reached a significantly large proportion of those in need; and the resulting reservoir of pervasive and deep grievance and frustration in the ghetto.

12. In the immediate aftermath of disorder, the status quo of daily life before the disorder generally was quickly restored. Yet, despite some notable public and private efforts, little basic change took place in the conditions underlying the disorder. In some cases, the result was increased distrust between blacks and whites, diminished interracial communication, and growth of Negro and white extremist groups.